Two Books of Soliloquies

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

Book 1

As I had been long revolving with myself matters many and various, and had been for many days sedulously inquiring both concerning myself and my chief good, or what of evil there was to be avoided by me: suddenly some one addresses me, whether I myself, or some other one, within me or without, I know not. For this very thing is what I chiefly toil to know. There says then to me, let us call it Reason,-Behold, assuming that you had discovered somewhat, to whose charge would you commit it, that you might go on with other things? A. To the memory, no doubt. R. But is the force of memory so great as to keep safely everything that may have been wrought out in thought? A. It hardly could, nay indeed it certainly could not. R. Therefore you must write. But what are you to do, seeing that your health recoils from the labor of writing? nor will these things bear to be dictated, seeing they consent not but with utter solitude. A. True. Therefore I am wholly at a loss what to say. R. Entreat of God health and help, that you may the better compass your desires, and commit to writing this very petition, that you may be the more courageous in the offspring of your brain. Then, what you discover sum up in a few brief conclusions. Nor care just now to invite a crowd of readers; it will suffice if these things find audience among the few of thine own city.

2. O God, Framer of the universe, grant me first rightly to invoke Thee; then to show myself worthy to be heard by Thee; lastly, deign to set me free. God, through whom all things, which of themselves were not, tend to be. God, who withholdest from perishing even that which seems to be mutually destructive. God, who, out of nothing, hast created this world, which the eyes of all perceive to be most beautiful. God, who dost not cause evil, but causest that it be not most evil. God, who to the few that flee for refuge to that which truly is, showest evil to be nothing. God, through whom the universe, even taking in its sinister side, is perfect. God, from whom things most widely at variance with Thee effect no dissonance, since worser things are included in one plan with better. God, who art loved, wittingly or unwittingly, by everything that is capable of loving. God, in whom are all things, to whom nevertheless neither the vileness of any creature is vile, nor its wickedness harmful, nor its error erroneous. God, who hast not willed that any but the pure should know the truth. God, the Father of truth, the Father of wisdom, the Father of the true and crowning life, the Father of blessedness, the Father of that which is good and fair, the Father of intelligible light, the Father of our awakening and illumination, the Father of the pledge by which we are admonished to return to Thee.

3. Thee I invoke, O God, the Truth, in whom and from whom and through whom all things are true which anywhere are true. God, the Wisdom, in whom and from whom and through whom all things are wise which anywhere are wise. God, the true and crowning Life, in whom and from whom and through whom all things live, which truly and supremely live. God, the Blessedness, in whom and from whom and through whom all things are blessed, which anywhere are blessed. God, the Good and Fair, in whom and from whom and through whom all things are good and fair, which anywhere are good and fair. God, the intelligible Light, in whom and from whom and through whom all things intelligibly shine, which anywhere intelligibly shine. God, whose kingdom is that whole world of which sense has no ken. God, from whose kingdom a law is even derived down upon these lower realms. God, from whom to be turned away, is to fall: to whom to be turned back, is to rise again: in whom to abide, is to stand firm. God, from whom to go forth, is to die: to whom to return, is to revive: in whom to have our dwelling, is to live. God, whom no one loses, unless deceived: whom no one seeks, unless stirred up: whom no one finds, unless made pure. God, whom to forsake, is one thing with perishing; towards whom to tend, is one thing with living: whom to see is one thing with having.

God, towards whom faith rouses us, hope lifts us up, with whom love joins us. God, through whom we overcome the enemy, Thee I entreat. God, through whose gift it is, that we do not perish utterly. God, by whom we are warned to watch. God, by whom we distinguish good from ill. God, by whom we flee evil, and follow good. God, through whom we yield not to calamities. God, through whom we faithfully serve and benignantly govern. God, through whom we learn those things to be another's which aforetime we accounted ours, and those things to be ours which we used to account as belonging to another. God, through whom the baits and enticements of evil things have no power to hold us. God, through whom it is that diminished possessions leave ourselves complete. God, through whom our better good is not subject to a worse. God, through whom death is swallowed up in victory. God, who dost turn us to Thyself. God, who dost strip us of that which is not, and arrayest us in that which is. God, who dost make us worthy to be heard. God, who dost fortify us. God, who leadest us into all truth. God, who speakest to us only good, who neither terrifiest into madness nor sufferest another so to do. God, who callest us back into the way. God, who leadest us to the door of life. God, who causest it to be opened to them that knock. God, who givest us the bread of life.

God, through whom we thirst for the draught, which being drunk we never thirst. God, who dost convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. God, through whom it is that we are not commoved by those who refuse to believe. God, through whom we disapprove the error of those, who think that there are no merits of souls before Thee. God, through whom it comes that we are not in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements. God, who cleansest us, and preparest us for Divine rewards, to me propitious come Thou.

4. Whatever has been said by me, Thou the only God, do Thou come to my help, the one true and eternal substance, where is no discord, no confusion, no shifting, no indigence, no

death. Where is supreme concord, supreme evidence, supreme steadfastness, supreme fullness, and life supreme. Where nothing is lacking, nothing redundant. Where Begetter and Begotten are one. God, whom all things serve, that serve, to whom is compliant every virtuous soul. By whose laws the poles revolve, the stars fulfill their courses, the sun vivifies the day, the moon tempers the night: and all the framework of things, day after day by vicissitude of light and gloom, month after month by waxings and wanings of the moon, year after year by orderly successions of spring and summer and fall and winter, cycle after cycle by accomplished concurrences of the solar course, and through the mighty orbs of time, folding and refolding upon themselves, as the stars still recur to their first conjunctions, maintains, so far as this merely visible matter allows, the mighty constancy of things. God, by whose ever-during laws the stable motion of shifting things is suffered to feel no perturbation, the thronging course of circling ages is ever recalled anew to the image of immovable quiet: by whose laws the choice of the soul is free, and to the good rewards and to the evil pains are distributed by necessities settled throughout the nature of everything. God, from whom distil even to us all benefits, by whom all evils are withheld from us.

God, above whom is nothing, beyond whom is nothing, without whom is nothing. God, under whom is the whole, in whom is the whole, with whom is the whole. Who hast made man after Thine image and likeness, which he discovers, who has come to know himself. Hear me, hear me, graciously hear me, my God, my Lord, my King, my Father, my Cause, my Hope, my Wealth, my Honor, my House, my Country, my Health, my Light, my Life. Hear, hear, hear me graciously, in that way, all Thine own, which though known to few is to those few known so well.

5. Henceforth Thee alone do I love, Thee alone I follow, Thee alone I seek, Thee alone am I prepared to serve, for Thou alone art Lord by a just title, of Thy dominion do I desire to be. Direct, I pray, and command whatever Thou wilt, but heal and open my ears, that I may hear Thine utterances. Heal and open my eyes, that I may behold Thy significations of command. Drive delusion from me, that I may recognize Thee. Tell me whither I must tend, to behold Thee, and I hope that I shall do all things Thou mayest enjoin. O Lord, most merciful Father receive, I pray, Thy fugitive; enough already, surely, have I been punished, long enough have I served Thine enemies, whom Thou hast under Thy feet, long enough have I been a sport of fallacies. Receive me fleeing from these, Thy house-born servant, for did not these receive me, though another Master's, when I was fleeing from Thee? To Thee I feel I must return: I knock; may Thy door be opened to me; teach me the way to Thee. Nothing else have I than the will: nothing else do I know than that fleeting and falling things are to be spurned, fixed and everlasting things to be sought. This I do, Father, because this alone I know, but from what quarter to approach Thee I do not know. Do Thou instruct me, show me, give me my provision for the way. If it is by faith that those find Thee, who take refuge with Thee then grant faith: if by virtue, virtue: if by knowledge, knowledge. Augment in me, faith, hope, and charity. O goodness of Thine, singular and most to be admired!

7. A. Behold I have prayed to God. R. What then wouldst thou know? A. All these things which I have prayed for. R. Sum them up in brief. A. God and the soul, that is what I desire to know. R. Nothing more? A. Nothing whatever. R. Therefore begin to inquire. But first explain how, if God should be set forth to thee, thou wouldst be able to say, It is enough. A. I know not how He is to be so set forth to me as that I shall say, It is enough: for I believe not that I know anything in such wise as I desire to know God. R. What then are we to do? Dost thou not judge that first thou oughtest to know, what it is to know God sufficiently, so that arriving at that point, thou mayst seek no farther? A. So I judge, indeed: but how that is to be brought about, I see not. For what have I ever understood like to God, so that I could say, As I understand this, so would I fain understand God? R. Not having yet made acquaintance with God, whence hast thou come to know that thou knowest nothing like to God? A. Because if I knew anything like God, I should doubtless love it: but now I love nothing else than God and the soul, neither of which I know. R. Do you then not love your friends? A. Loving them, how can I otherwise than love the soul? R.

Do you then love gnats and bugs similarly? A. The animating soul I said I loved, not animals. R. Men are then either not your friends, or you do not love them. For every man is an animal, and you say that you do not love animals. A. Men are my friends, and I love them, not in that they are animals, but in that they are men, that is, in that they are animated by rational souls, which I love even in highwaymen. For I may with good right in any man love reason, even though I rightly hate him, who uses ill that which I love. Therefore I love my friends the more, the more worthily they use their rational soul, or certainly the more earnestly they desire to use it worthily.

8. R. I allow so much: but yet if any one should say to thee, I will give thee to know God as well as thou dost know Alypius, wouldst thou not give thanks, and say, It is enough? A. I should give thanks indeed: but I should not say, It is enough. R. Why, I pray? A. Because I do not even know God so well as I know Alypius, and yet I do not know Alypius well enough. R. Beware then lest shamelessly thou wouldest fain be satisfied in the knowledge of God, who hast not even such a knowledge of Alypius as satisfies. A. Non sequitur. For, comparing it with the stars, what is of lower account than my supper? and yet what I shall sup on to-morrow I know not: but in what sign the moon will be, I need take no shame to profess that I know. R. Is it then enough for thee to know God as well as thou dost know in what sign the moon will hold her course to-morrow? A. It is not enough, for this I test by the senses. But I do not know whether or not either God, or some hidden cause of nature may suddenly change the moon's ordinary course, which if it came to pass, would render false all that I had presumed. R. And believest thou that this may happen? A. I do not believe. But I at least am seeking what I may know, not what I may believe.

Now everything that we know, we may with reason perhaps be said to believe, but not to know everything which we believe. A. In this matter therefore you reject all testimony of the senses? A. I utterly reject it. R. That friend of yours then, whom you say you do not yet know, is it by sense that you wish to know him or by intellectual perception? A. Whatever

in him I know by sense, if indeed anything is known by sense, is both mean and sufficiently known. But that part which bears affection to me, that is, the mind itself. I desire to know intellectually. R. Can it, indeed, be known otherwise? A. By no means. R. Do you venture then to call your friend, your inmost friend, unknown to you? A. Why not venture? For I account most equitable that law of friendship, by which it is prescribed, that as one is to bear no less, so he is to bear no more affection to his friend than to himself. Since then I know not myself, what injury does he suffer, whom I declare to be unknown to me, above all since (as I believe) he does not even know himself? R.

If then these things which thou wouldst fain know, are of such a sort as are to be intellectually attained, when I said it was shameless in thee to crave to know God, when thou knowest not even Alypius, thou oughtest not to have urged to me the similitude of thy supper and the moon, if these things, as thou hast said, appertain to sense.

9. But let that go, and now answer to this: if those things which Plato and Plotinus have said concerning God are true, is it enough for thee to know God as they knew him? A. Even allowing that those things which they have said are true, does it follow at once that they knew them? For many copiously utter what they do not know, as I myself have said that I desired to know all those things for which I prayed, which I should not desire if I knew them already: yet I was none the less able to enumerate them all. For I have enumerated not what I intellectually comprehended, but things which I have gathered from all sides and entrusted to my memory, and to which I yield as ample a faith as I am able: but to know is another thing. R. Tell me, I pray, do you at least know in geometry what a line is? A. So much I certainly know. R. Nor in professing so do you stand in awe of the Academicians? R. In no wise. For they, as wise men, would not run the risk of erring: but I am not wise. Therefore as yet I do not shrink from professing the knowledge of those things which I have come to know. But if, as I desire, I should ever have attained to wisdom, I will do what I may find her to suggest. R. I except not thereto:

but, I had begun to inquire, as you know a line, do you also know a ball, or, as they say, a sphere? A. I do. R. Both alike, or one more, one less? A. Just alike. I am altogether certain of both. R. Have you grasped these by the senses or the intellect? A. Nay, I have essayed the senses in this matter as a ship. For after they had carried me to the place I was aiming for, and I had dismissed them, and was now, as it were, left on dry ground, where I began to turn these things over in thought, the oscillations of the senses long continued to swim in my brain. Wherefore it seems to me that it would be easier to sail on dry land, than to learn geometry by the senses, although young beginners seem to derive some help from them. R. Then you do not hesitate to call whatever acquaintance you have with such things, Knowledge? A. Not if the Stoics permit, who attribute knowledge only to the Wise Man. Certainly I maintain myself to have the perception of these things, which they concede even to folly: but neither am I at all in any great fear of the stoics: unquestionably I hold those things which thou hast questioned me of in knowledge: proceed now till I see to what end

thou questionest me of them. R. Be not too eager, we are not pressed for time. But give strict heed, lest you should make some rash concession.

I would fain give thee the joy of things wherein thou fearest not to slip, and dost thou enjoin haste, as in a matter of no moment? A. God grant the event as thou forecastest it. Therefore question at thy will, and rebuke me more sharply if I err so again.

10. R. It is then plain to you that a line cannot possibly be longitudinally divided into two? A. Plainly so. R. What of a cross-section? A. This, of course, is possible to infinity. R. But is it equally apparent that if, beginning with the centre, you make any sections you please of a sphere, no two resulting circles will be equal? A. It is equally apparent. R. What are a line and a sphere? Do they seem to you to be identical, or somewhat different? A. Who does not see that they differ very much? R. If then you know this and that equally well, while yet, as you acknowledge, they differ widely from each other, there must be an indifferent knowledge of different things. A. Who ever disputed it? R. You, a little while ago. For when I asked thee what way of knowing God was in thy desire, such that thou couldst say, It is enough, thou didst answer that thou couldst not explain this, because thou hadst no perception held in such a way as that in which thou didst desire to perceive God, for that thou didst know nothing like God. What then? Are a line and sphere alike? A. Absurd. R. But I had asked, not what you knew such as God, but what you knew so as you desire to know God. For you know a line in such wise as you know a sphere, although the properties of a line are not those of a sphere. Wherefore answer whether it would suffice you to know God in such wise as you know that geometrical ball; that is, to be equally without doubt concerning God as concerning that.

11. A. Pardon me, however vehemently thou urge and argue, yet I dare not say that I wish so to know God as I know these things. For not only the objects of the knowledge, but the knowledge itself appears to be unlike. First, because the line and the ball are not so unlike, but that one science includes the knowledge of them both: but no geometrician has ever professed to teach God. Then, if the knowledge of God and of these things were equivalent, I should rejoice as much to know them as I am persuaded that I should rejoice if God were known by me. But now I hold these things in the deepest disdain in comparison with Him, so that sometimes it seems to me that if I understood Him, and that in that manner in which He can be seen, all these things would perish out of my knowledge: since even now by reason of the love of Him they scarce come into my mind. R. Allow that thou wouldst rejoice more and much more in knowing God than in knowing these things, yet not by a different perception of the things; unless we are to say that thou beholdest with a different vision the earth and the serenity of the skies, although the aspect of this latter soothes and delights thee far more than of the former. But unless your eyes are deceived, I believe that, if asked whether you are as well assured that you see earth as heaven, you ought to answer yes, although you are not as much delighted by the earth and her beauty as by the beauty and magnificence of heaven. A. I am moved, I confess, by this similitude, and am brought to allow that by how much earth differs in her kind from heaven, so much do those

demonstrations of the sciences, true and certain as they are, differ from the intelligible majesty of God.

12. R. Thou art moved to good effect. For the Reason which is talking with thee promises so to demonstrate God to thy mind, as the sun demonstrates himself to the eyes. For the senses of the soul are as it were the eyes of the mind; but all the certainties of the sciences are like those things which are brought to light by the sun, that they may be seen, the earth, for instance, and the things upon it: while God is Himself the Illuminator. Now I, Reason, am that in the mind, which the act of looking is in the eyes. For to have eyes is not the same as to look; nor again to look the same as to see. Therefore the soul has need of three distinct things: to have eyes, such as it can use to good advantage, to look, and to see. Sound eyes, that means the mind pure from all stain of the body, that is, now remote and purged from the lusts of mortal things: which, in the first condition, nothing else accomplishes for her than Faith. For what cannot yet be shown forth to her stained and languishing with sins, because, unless sound, she cannot see, if she does not believe that otherwise she will not see, she gives no heed to her health. But what if she believes that the case stands as I say, and that, if she is to see at all, she can only see on these terms, but despairs of being healed;

does she not utterly contemn herself and cast herself away, refusing to comply with the prescriptions of the physician? A. Beyond doubt, above all because by sickness remedies must needs be felt as severe. R. Then Hope must be added to Faith. A. So I believe. R. Moreover, if she both believes that the case stands so, and hopes that she could be healed, yet loves not, desires not the promised light itself, and thinks that she ought meanwhile to be content with her darkness, which now, by use, has become pleasant to her; does she not none the less reject the physician? A. Beyond doubt. R. Therefore Charity must needs make a third. A. Nothing so needful. R. Without these three things therefore no mind is healed, so that it can see, that is, understand its God.

13. When therefore the mind has come to have sound eyes, what next? A. That she look. R. The mind's act of looking is Reason; but because it does not follow that every one who looks sees, a right and perfect act of looking, that is, one followed by vision, is called Virtue; for Virtue is either right or perfect Reason. But even the power of vision, though the eyes be now healed, has not force to turn them to the light, unless these three things abide. Faith, whereby the soul believes that thing, to which she is asked to turn her gaze, is of such sort, that being seen it will give blessedness; Hope, whereby the mind judges that if she looks attentively, she will see; Charity, whereby she desires to see and to be filled with the enjoyment of the sight. The attentive view is now followed by the very vision of God, which is the end of looking; not because the power of beholding ceases, but because it has nothing further to which it can turn itself: and this is the truly perfect virtue, Virtue arriving at its end, which is followed by the life of blessedness. Now this vision itself is that apprehension which is in the soul, compounded of the apprehending subject and of that which is apprehended: as in like manner seeing with the eyes results from the conjunction of the sense and the object of sense, either of which being withdrawn, seeing becomes impossible.

14. Therefore when the soul has obtained to see, that is, to apprehend God, let us see whether those three things are still necessary to her. Why should Faith be necessary to the soul, when she now sees? Or Hope, when she already grasps? But from Charity not only is nothing diminished, but rather it receives large increase. For when the soul has once seen that unique and unfalsified Beauty, she will love it the more, and unless she shall with great love have fastened her gaze thereon, nor any way declined from the view, she will not be able to abide in that most blessed vision. But while the soul is in this body, even though she most fully sees, that is, apprehends God; yet, because the bodily senses still have their proper effect, if they have no prevalency to mislead, yet they are not without a certain power to call in doubt, therefore that may be called Faith whereby these dispositions are resisted, and the opposing truth affirmed. Moreover, in this life, although the soul is already blessed in the apprehension of God; yet, because she endures many irksome pains of the body, she has occasion of hope that after death all these incommodities will have ceased to be. Therefore neither does Hope, so long as she is in this life, desert the soul. But when after this life she shall have wholly collected herself in God, Charity remains whereby she is retained there. For neither can she be said to have Faith that those things are true, when she is solicited by no interruption of falsities; nor does anything remain for her to hope, whereas she securely possesses the whole. Three things therefore pertain to the soul, that she be sane, that she behold, that she see. And other three, Faith, Hope, Charity, for the first and second of those three conditions are always necessary: for the third in this life all; after this life, Charity alone.

15. Now listen, so far as the present time requires, while from that similitude of sensible things I now teach also something concerning God. Namely, God is intelligible, not sensible, intelligible also are those demonstrations of the schools; nevertheless they differ very widely. For as the earth is visible, so is light; but the earth, unless illumined by light, cannot be seen. Therefore those things also which are taught in the schools, which no one who understands them doubts in the least to be absolutely true, we must believe to be incapable of being understood, unless they are illuminated by somewhat else, as it were a sun of their own. Therefore as in this visible sun we may observe three things: that he is, that he shines, that he illuminates: so in that God most far withdrawn whom thou wouldst fain apprehend, there are these three things: that He is, that He is apprehended, and that He makes other things to be apprehended. These two, God and thyself, I dare promise that I can teach thee to understand. But give answer how thou receivest these things, as probable, or as true? A. As probable certainly; and, as I must own, I have been hoping more: for excepting those two illustrations of the line and the globe, nothing has been said by thee which I should dare to say that I know. R. It is not to be wondered at: for nothing has been yet so set forth, as that it exacts of thee perception.

16. But why do we delay? Let us set out: but first let us see (for this comes first) whether we are in a sound state. A. Do thou see to it, if either in thyself or in me that hast any discernment of what is to be found; I will answer, being inquired of, to my best knowledge. R. Do you love anything besides the knowledge of God and yourself? A. I might answer,

that I love nothing besides, having regard to my present feelings; but I should be safer to say that I do not know. For it hath often chanced to me, that when I believed I was open to nothing else, something nevertheless would come into the mind which stung me otherwise than I had presumed. So often, when something, conceived in thought, disturbed me little, yet when it came in fact it disquieted me more than I supposed: but now I do not see myself sensible to perturbation except by three things; by the fear of losing those whom I love, by the fear of pain, by the fear of death. R. You love, therefore, both a life associated with those dearest to you, and your own good health, and your bodily life itself: or you would not fear the loss of these. A. It is so, I acknowledge. R. Now therefore, the fact that all your friends are not with you, and that your health is not very firm, occasions you some uneasiness of mind. For that I see to be implied. A.

Thou seest rightly; I am not able to deny it. R. How if you should suddenly feel and find yourself sound in health, and should see all whom you love and who love each other, enjoying in your company liberal ease? would you not think it right to give way in reasonable measure even to transports of joy? A. In a measure, undoubtedly. Nay, if these things, as thou sayest, bechanced me suddenly, how could I contain myself? how could I possibly even dissemble joy of such a sort? R. As yet, therefore, you are tossed about by all the diseases and perturbations of the mind. What shamelessness, then, that with such eyes you should wish to see such a Sun A. Thy conclusion then is, that I am utterly ignorant how far I am advanced in health, how far disease has receded, or how far it remains. Suppose me to grant this.

17. R. Do you not see that these eyes of the body, even when sound, are often so smitten by the light of this visible sun, as to be compelled to turn away and to take refuge in their own obscurity? Now you are proposing to yourself what you are moved to seek, but are not proposing to yourself what you desire to see: and yet I would discuss this very thing with you, what advance you think we have made. Are you without desire of riches? A. This at least no longer chiefly. For, being now three and thirty years of age, for almost these fourteen years last past I have ceased to desire them, nor have I sought anything from them, if by chance they should be offered, beyond the necessities of life and such a use of them as agrees with the state of a freeman. A single book of Cicero has thoroughly persuaded me, that riches are in no wise to be craved, but that if they come in our way, they are to be with the utmost wisdom and caution administered. R. What of honors? A. I confess that it is only lately, and as it were yesterday, that I have ceased to desire these. R. What of a wife?

Are you not sometimes charmed by the image of a beautiful, modest, complying maiden, well lettered, or of pans that can easily be trained by you, bringing you too (being a despiser of riches) just so large a dowry as will relieve your leisure of all burden on her account? It is implied, moreover, that you have good hope of coming to no grief through her. A. However much thou please to portray her and adorn her with all manner of gifts, I have determined that nothing is so much to be avoided by me as such a bedfellow: I perceive that nothing more saps the citadel of manly strength, whether of mind or body, than female blandishments

and familiarities. Therefore, if (which I have not yet discovered) it appertains to the office of a wise man to desire offspring, whoever for this reason only comes into this connection, may appear to me worthy of admiration, but in no wise a model for imitation: for there is more peril in the essay, than felicity in the accomplishment. Wherefore, I believe, I am contradicting neither justice nor utility in providing for the liberty of my mind by neither desiring, nor seeking, nor taking a wife. R. I inquire not now what thou hast determined, but whether thou dost yet struggle, or hast indeed already overcome desire itself. For we are considering the soundness of thine eyes. A. Nothing of the kind do I any way seek, nothing do I desire;

it is even with horror and loathing that I recall such things to mind. What more wouldst thou? And day by day does this benefit grow upon me: for the more I grow in the hope of beholding that supernal Beauty with the desire of which I glow, the more my love and delight is wholly converted thereto. R. What of pleasant viands? How much do you care for them? A. Those things which I have determined not to eat, tempt me not. As to those which I have not cut off, I allow that I take pleasure in their present use, yet so that without any disturbance of mind, either the sight or the taste of them may be withdrawn. And when they are entirely absent, no craving of them dares intrude itself to the disturbance of my thoughts. But no need to inquire concerning food or drink, or baths: so much of these do I seek to have, as is profitable for the confirmation of health.

18. R. Thou hast made great progress: yet those things which remain in order to the seeing of that light, very greatly impede. But I am aiming at something which appears to me very easy to be shown; that either nothing remains to us to be subdued, or that we have made no advance at all, and that the taint of all those things which we believed cut away remains. For I ask of thee, if thou weft persuaded that thou couldst live with the throng of those dearest to thee in the study and pursuit of wisdom on no other terms than as possessed of an estate ample enough to meet all your joint necessities; would you not desire and seek for wealth? A. I should. R. How, if it should also be clear, that you would be to many a master of wisdom, if your authority in teaching were supported by civil honor, and that even these your familiars would not be able to put a bridle on their cravings except as they too were in honor, and that this could only accrue to them through your honors and dignity? would not honor then be a worthy object of desire, and of strenuous pursuit? A. It is as thou sayest. R. I do not consider the question of a wife; for perhaps no such necessity could arise of marrying one: although if it were certain that by her ample patrimony all those could be sustained whom thou wouldst fain have live at ease with thee in one place, and that moreover with her cordial consent, especially if she were of a family of such nobility as that through her those honors which you have just granted, in our hypothesis, to be necessary, could easily be attained, I do not know that it would be any part of your duty to contemn these advantages, thus obtained.A. But how could I hope for such things?

19. R. You speak as if I were now inquiring what you hope. I am not inquiring what, denied, delights not, but what delights, obtained. For an extinguished plague is one thing, a dor-

mant plague another. And, as some wise men say, all pools are so unsound, that they always smell of every foul thing, although you do not always perceive this, but only when you stir them up. And there is a wide difference whether a craving is suppressed by hopelessness of compassing it, or is expelled by saneness of soul. A. Although I am not able to answer thee, never wilt thou, for all this, persuade me that in this affection of mind in which I now perceive myself to be, I have advantaged nothing. R. This, doubtless, appears so to thee, because although thou mightest desire these things, yet they would not seem to thee objects of desire, on their own account, but for ulterior ends. A. That is what I was endeavoring to say: for when I desired riches, I desired them for this reason, that I might be rich. And those honors, the lust of which I have declared myself to have but even now thoroughly overcome, I craved by a mere delight in some intrinsic splendor I imputed to them; and nothing else did I expect in a wife, when I expected, than the reputable enjoyment of voluptuousness. Then there was in me a veritable craving for those things; now I utterly contemn them all: but if I cannot except through these find a passage to those things which in effect I desire, I do not pursue them as things to be embraced, but accept them as things to be allowed. R. A thoroughly excellent distinction: for neither do I impute unworthiness to the desire of any lower things that are sought on account of something else.

20. But I ask of thee, why thou dost desire, either that the persons whom thou affectest should live, or that they should live with thee. A. That together and concordantly we might inquire out God and our souls. For so, whichever first discovers aught, easily introduces his companions into it. R. What if these will not inquire? A. I would persuade them into the love of it, R. What if you could not, be it that they suppose themselves to have already found, or think that such things are beyond discovery, or that they are entangled in cares and cravings of other things? A. We will use our best endeavors, I with them, and they with me. R. What if even their presence impedes you in your inquiries would you not choose and endeavor that they should not be with you, rather than be with you on such terms? A. I own it is as thou sayest. R. It is not therefore on its own account that you crave either their life or presence, but as an auxiliary in the discovery of wisdom? A. I thoroughly agree to that. R. Further: if you were certain that your own life were an impediment to your comprehension of wisdom, should you desire its continuance? A. I should utterly eschew it. R. Furthermore:

if thou wert taught, that either in this body or after leaving it thou couldst equally well attain unto wisdom, wouldst thou care whether it was in this or another life that thou didst enjoy that which thou supremely affectest? A. If I ascertained that I was to experience nothing worse, which would lead me back from the point to which I had made progress, I should not care. R. Then thy present dread of death rests on the fear of being involved in some worse evil, whereby the Divine cognition may be borne away from thee. A. Not solely such a possible loss do I dread, if I have any right understanding of the fact, but also lest access should be barred me into those things which I am now eager to explore; although what I already possess, I believe will remain with me. R. Therefore not for the sake of this

life in itself, but for the sake of wisdom thou dost desire the continuance of this life. A. It is the truth.

21. R. We have pain of body left, which perhaps moves thee of its proper force. A. Nor indeed do I grievously dread even that for any other reason than that it impedes me in my research. For although of late I have been grievously tormented with attacks of toothache, so that I was not suffered to revolve aught in my mind except such things as I have been engaged in learning; while, as the whole intensity of my mind was requisite for new advances, I was entirely restrained from making these: yet it seemed to me, that if the essential refulgence of Truth would disclose itself to me, I should either not have felt that pain, or certainly would have made no account of it. But although I have never had anything severer to bear, yet, often reflecting how much severer the pains are which I might have to bear, I am sometimes forced to agree with Cornelius Celsus, who says that the supreme good is wisdom, and the supreme evil bodily pain. For since, says he, we are composed of two parts, namely, mind and body, of which the former part, the mind, is the better, the body the worse; the highest good is the best of the better part, and the chiefest evil the worst of the inferior; now the best thing in the mind is wisdom, and the worst thing in the body is pain. It is concluded, therefore, and as I fancy, most justly, that the chief good of man is to be wise, and his chief evil, to suffer pain. R. We will consider this later. For perchance Wisdom herself, towards which we strive, will bring us to be of another mind. But if she should show this to be true, we will then not hesitate to adhere to this your present judgment concerning the highest good and the deepest ill.

22. Now let us inquire concerning this, what sort of lover of wisdom thou art, whom thou desirest to behold with most chaste view and embrace, and to grasp her unveiled charms in such wise as she affords herself to no one, except to her few and choicest rotaries. For assuredly a beautiful woman, who had kindled thee to ardent love, would never surrender herself to thee, if she had discovered that thou hadst in thy heart another object of affection; and shall that most chaste beauty, of Wisdom exhibit itself to thee, unless thou art kindled for it alone? A. Why then am I still made to hang in wretchedness, and put off with miserable pining? Assuredly I have already made it plain that I love nothing else, since what is not loved for itself is not loved. Now I at least love Wisdom for herself alone, while as to other things, it is for her sake that I desire their presence or absence, such as life, ease, friends. But what measure can the love of that beauty have in which I not only do not envy others, but even long for as many as possible to seek it, gaze upon it, grasp it and enjoy it with me; knowing that our friendship will be the closer, the more thoroughly conjoined we are in the object of our love?

23. R. Such lovers assuredly it is, whom Wisdom ought to have. Such lovers does she seek, the love of whom has in it nothing but what is pure. But there are various ways of approach to her. For it is according to our soundness and strength that each one comprehends that unique and truest good. It is a certain ineffable and incomprehensible light of minds. Let this light of the common day teach us, as well as it can, concerning the higher light. For

there are eyes so sound and keen, that, as soon as they are first opened, they turn themselves unshrinkingly upon the sun himself. To these, as it were, the light itself is health, nor do they need a teacher, but only, perchance, a warning. For these to believe, to hope, to love is enough. But others are smitten by that very effulgence which they vehemently desire to see, and when the sight of it is withdrawn often return into darkness with delight. To whom, although such as that they may reasonably be called sound, it is nevertheless dangerous to insist on showing what as yet they have not the power to behold. These therefore should be first put in training, and their love for their good is to be nourished by delay. For first certain things are to be shown to them which are not luminous of themselves, but may be seen by the light, such as a garment, a wall, or the like.

Then something which, though still not shining of itself, yet in the light flames out more gloriously, such as gold or silver, yet not so brilliantly as to injure the eyes. Then perchance this familiar fire of earth is to be cautiously shown, then the stars, then the moon, then the brightening dawn, and the brilliance of the luminous sky. Among which things, whether sooner or later, whether through the whole succession, or with some steps passed over, each one accustoming himself according to his strength, will at last without shrinking and with great delight behold the sun. In some such way do the best masters deal with those who are heartily devoted to Wisdom, and who, though seeing but dimly, yet have already eyes that see. For it is the office of a wise training to bring one near to her in a certain graduated approach, but to arrive in her presence without these intermediary steps is a scarcely credible felicity. But to-day, I think we have written enough; regard must be had to health.

24. And, another day having come, A. Give now, I pray, if thou canst, that order. Lead by what way thou wilt, through what things thou wilt, how thou wilt. Lay on me things ever so hard, ever so strenuous, and, if only they are within my power, I doubt not that I shall perform them if only I may thereby arrive whither I long to be. R. There is only one thing which I can teach thee; I know nothing more. These things of sense are to be utterly eschewed, and the utmost caution is to be used, lest while we bear about this body, our pinions should be impeded by the viscous distilments of earth, seeing we need them whole and perfect, if we would fly from this darkness into that supernal Light: which deigns not even to show itself to those shut up in this cage of the body, unless they have been such that whether it were broken down or worn out it would be their native airs into which they escaped. Therefore, whenever thou shall have become such that nothing at all of earthly things delights thee, at that very moment, believe me, at that very point of time thou wilt see what thou desirest. A. When shall that be, I entreat thee? For I think not that I am able to attain to this supreme contempt, unless I shall have seen that in comparison with which these things are worthless.

25. R. In this way too the bodily eye might say: I shall not love the darkness, when I shall have seen the sun. For this too seems, as it were, to pertain to the right order though t is far otherwise. For it loves darkness, for the reason that it is not sound; but the sun, unless sound, it is not able to see. And in this the mind is often at fault, that it thinks itself and

boasts itself sound; and complains, as if with good ight, because it does not yet see. But that supernal Beauty knows when she should show herself. For she herself discharges the office of physician, and better understands who are sound than the very ones who are rendered sound. But we, as far as we have emerged, seem to ourselves to see; but how far we were plunged in darkness, or how far we had made progress, we are not permitted either to think or feel, and in comparison with the deeper malady we believe ourselves to be in health. See you not how securely yesterday we had pronounced, that we were no longer detained by any evil thing, and loved nothing except Wisdom; and sought or wished other things only for her sake? To thee how low, how foul, how execrable those female embraces seemed, when we discoursed concerning the desire of a wife! Certainly in the watches of this very night, when we had again been discoursing together of the same things, thou didst feel how differently from what thou hadst presumed those imaginary blandishments and that bitter sweetness tickled thee; far, far less indeed, than is the wont, but also far otherwise than thou hadst thought: so that that most confidential physician of thine set forth to thee each thing, both how far thou hast come on under his care, and what remains to be cured.

26. A. Peace, I pray thee, peace. Why tormentest thou me? Why diggest thou so remorselessly and descendest so deep? Now I weep intolerably, henceforth I promise nothing, I presume nothing; question me not concerning these things. Most true is what thou sayest, that He whom I burn to see Himself knows when I am in health; let Him do what pleaseth Him: when it pleaseth Him let Him show Himself; I now commit myself wholly to His clemency and care. Once for all do I believe that those so affected towards Him He faileth not to lift up. I will pronounce nothing concerning my health, except when I shall have seen that Beauty. R. Do nothing else, indeed. But now refrain from tears, and gird up thy mind. Thou hast wept. most sore, and to the great aggravation of that trouble of thy breast. A. Wouldest thou set a measure to my tears, when I see no measure of my misery? or dost thou bid me consider the disease of my body, when I in my inmost self am wasted away with pining consumption? But, I pray thee, if thou availest aught over me, essay to lead me through some shorter ways, so that, at least by some neighbor nearness of that Light, such as, if I have made any advance whatever, I shall be able to endure, I may be made ashamed of withdrawing my eyes into that darkness which I have left; if indeed I can be said to have left a darkness which yet dares to daily with my blindness.

27. R. Let us conclude, if you will, this first volume, that in a second we may attempt some such way as may commodiously offer itself. For this disposition of yours must not fail to be cherished by reasonable exercise. A. I will in no wise suffer this volume to be ended, unless thou open to me at least a gleam from the nearness of that Light whither I am bound. R. Thy Divine Physician yields so far to thy wish. For a certain radiance seizes me, inviting me to conduct thee to it. Therefore be intent to receive it. A. Lead, I entreat thee, and snatch me away whither thou wilt. R. Thou art sure that thou art minded to know the soul, and God? A. That is all my desire. R. Nothing more? A. Nothing at all. R. What, do you not wish to comprehend Truth? A. As if I could know these things except through her. R. Therefore she first is to be known, through whom these things can be known. A. I refuse not. R. First

then let us see this, whether, as Truth and True are two words, you hold that by these two words two things are signified, or one thing. A. Two things, I hold. For, as Chastity is one thing, and that which is chaste, another, and many things in this manner; so I believe that Truth is one thing, and that which, being declared, is true, is another. R. Which of these two do you esteem most excellent? A. Truth, as I believe. For it is not from that which is chaste that Chastity arises, but that which is chaste from Chastity. So also, if anything is true, it is assuredly from Truth that it is true.

28. R. What? When a chaste person dies, do you judge that Chastity dies also? A. By no means. R. Then, when anything perishes that is true, Truth perishes not. A. But how should anything true perish? For I see not. R. I marvel that you ask that question: do we not see thousands of things perish before our eyes? Unless perchance you think this tree, either to be a tree, but not a true one, or if so to be unable to perish. For even if you believe not your senses, and are capable of answering, that you are wholly ignorant whether it is a tree; yet this, I believe, you will not deny, that it is a true tree, if it is a tree: for this judgment is not of the senses, but of the intelligence. For if it is a false tree, it is not a tree; but if it is a tree, it cannot but be a true one. A. This I allow. R. Then as to the other proposition; do you not concede that a tree is of such a sort of things, as that it originates and perishes? A. I cannot deny it. R. It is concluded therefore, that something which is true perishes. A. I do not dispute it. R. What follows? Does it not seem to thee that when true things perish Truth does not perish, as Chastity dies not when a chaste person dies? A. I now grant this too, and eagerly wait to see what thou art laboring to show. R. Therefore attend. A. I am all attention.

29. R. Does this proposition seem to you to be true: Whatever is, is compelled to be somewhere? A. Nothing so entirely wins my consent. R. And you confess that Truth is? A. I confess it. R. Then we must needs inquire where it is; for it is not in a place, unless perchance you think there is something else in a place than a body, or think that Truth is a body. A. I think neither of these things. R. Where then do you believe her to be? For she is not nowhere, whom we have granted to be. A. If I knew where she was, perchance I should seek nothing more. R. At least you are able to know where she is not? A. If thou pass in review the places, perchance I shall be. R. It is not, assuredly, in mortal things. For whatever is, cannot abide in anything, if that does not abide in which it is: and that Truth abides, even though true things perish, has just been conceded. Truth, therefore, is not in mortal things. But Truth is, and is not nowhere. There are therefore things immortal. And nothing is true in which Truth is not. It results therefore that nothing is true, except those things which are immortal. And every false tree is not a tree, and false wood is not wood, and false silver is not silver, and everything whatever which is false, is not. Now everything which is not true, is false. Nothing therefore is rightly said to be, except things immortal. Do you diligently consider this little argument, lest there should be in it any point which you think impossible to concede. For if it is sound, we have almost accomplished our whole business, which in the other book will perchance appear more plainly.

30. A. I thank thee much, and will diligently and cautiously review these things in my own mind, and moreover with thee, when we are in quiet, if no darkness interfere, and, which I vehemently dread, inspire in me delight in itself. R. Steadfastly believe in God, and commit thyself wholly to Him as much as thou canst. Be not willing to be as it were thine own and in thine own control; but profess thyself to be the bondman of that most clement and most profitable Lord. For so will He not desist from lifting thee to Himself, and will suffer nothing to occur to thee, except what shall profit thee, even though thou know it not. A. I hear, I believe, and as much as I can I yield compliance; and most intently do I offer a prayer for this very thing, that I may have the utmost power, unless perchance thou desirest something more of me. R. It is well meanwhile, thou wilt do afterwards what He Himself, being now seen, shall require of thee.

Book 2

1. A. Long enough has our work been intermitted, and impatient is Love, nor have tears a measure, unless to Love is given what is loved: wherefore, let us enter upon the Second Book. R. Let us enter upon it. A. Let us believe that God will be present. R. Let us believe indeed, if even this is in our power. A. Our power He Himself is. R. Therefore pray most briefly and perfectly, as much as thou canst. A. God, always the same, let me know myself, let me know Thee. I have prayed. R. Thou who wilt know thyself, knowest thou that thou art? A. I know. R. Whence knowest thou? A. I know not. R. Feelest thou thyself to be simple, or manifold? A. I know not. R. Knowest thou thyself tO be moved? A. I know not. R. Knowest thou thyself to think? A. I know. R. Therefore it is true that thou thinkest. A. True. R. Knowest thou thyself to be immortal? A. I know not. R. Of all these things which thou hast said that thou knowest not: which dost thou most desire to know? A. Whether I am immortal. R. Therefore thou lovest to live? A. I confess it. R. How will the matter stand when thou shalt have learned thyself to be immortal? Will it be enough? A. That will indeed be a great thing, but that to me will be but slight. R. Yet in this which is but slight how much wilt thou rejoice? A. Very greatly. R.

For nothing then wilt thou weep? A. For nothing at all. R. What if this very life should be found such, that in it it is permitted thee to know nothing more than thou knowest? Wilt thou refrain from tears? A. Nay verily, I will weep so much that life should cease to be. R. Thou dost not then love to live for the mere sake of living, but for the sake of knowing. A. I grant the inference. R. What if this very knowledge of things should itself make thee wretched? A. I do not believe that that is in any way possible. But if it is so, no one can be blessed; for I am not now wretched from any other source than from ignorance of things. And therefore if the knowledge of things is wretchedness, wretchedness is everlasting. R. Now I see all which you desire. For since you believe no one to be wretched by knowledge, from which it is probable that intelligence renders blessed; but no one is blessed unless living, and no one lives who is not: thou wishest to be, to live and to have intelligence; but to be that thou mayest live, to live that thou mayest have intelligence. Therefore thou knowest that thou art, thou knowest that thou livest, thou knowest that thou dost exercise intelligence.

But whether these things are to be always, or none of these things is to be, or something abides always, and something falls away, or whether these things can be diminished and

increased, all things abiding, thou desirest to know. A. So it is. R. If therefore we shall have proved that we are always to live, it will follow also that we are always to be. A. It will follow. R. It will then remain to inquire concerning intellection.

2. A. I see a very plain and compendious order. R. Let this then be the order, that you answer my questions cautiously and firmly. A. I attend. R. If this world shall always abide, it is true that this world is always to abide? A. Who doubts that? R. What if it shall not abide? is it not then true that the world is not to abide? A. I dispute it not. R. How, when it shall have perished, if it is to perish, will it not then be true, that the world has perished? For as long as it is not true that the world has come to an end, it has not come to an end: it is therefore self-contradictory, that the world is ended and that it is not true that the world is ended. A. This too I grant. R. Furthermore, does it seem to you that anything can be true, and not be Truth? A. In no wise. R. There will therefore be Truth, even though the frame of things should pass away. A. I cannot deny it. R. What if Truth herself should perish? will it not be true that Truth has perished? A. And even that who can deny? R. But that which is true cannot be, if Truth is not. A. I have just conceded this. R. In no wise therefore can Truth fail. A. Proceed as thou hast begun, for than this deduction nothing is truer.

3. R. Now I will have you answer me, does the soul seem to you to feel and perceive, or the body? A. The soul. R. And does the intellect appear to you to appertain to the soul? A. Assuredly. R. To the soul alone, or to something else? A. I see nothing else besides the soul, except God, in which I believe intellect to exist. R. Let us now consider that. If any one should tell you that wall was not a wall, but a tree, what would you think? A. Either that his senses or mine were astray, or that he called a wall by the name of a tree. R. What if he received in sense the image of a tree, and thou of a wall may not both be true? A. By no means; because one and the same thing cannot be both a tree and a wall. For however individual things might appear different to us as individuals, it could not be but that one of us suffered a false imagination. R. What if it is neither tree nor wall, and you are both in error? A. That, indeed, is possible. R. This one thing therefore you had past by above. A. I confess it. R. What if you should acknowledge that anything seemed to you other than it is, are you then in error? A. No. R. Therefore that may be false which seems, and he not be in error to whom it seems. A. It may be so. R.

It is to be allowed then that he is not in error who sees falsities, but he who assents to falsities. A. It is assuredly to be allowed. R. And this falsity, wherefore is it false? A. Because it is otherwise than it seems. R. If therefore there are none to whom it may seem, nothing is false. A. The inference is sound. R. i Therefore the falsity is not in the things, but in the sense; but he is not beguiled who assents not to false things. It results that we are one thing, the sense another; since, when it is misled, we are able not to be misled. A. I have nothing to oppose to this. R. But when the soul is misled, do you venture to say that you are not false? A. How should I venture? R. But there is no sense without soul, no falsity without sense. Either therefore the soul operates, or cooperates with the falsity. A. Our preceding reasonings imply assent to this.

4. R. Give answer now to this, whether it appears to you possible that at some time hereafter falsity should not be. A. How can that seem possible to me, when the difficulty of discovering truth is so great that it is absurder to say that falsity than that Truth cannot be. R. Do you then think that he who does not live, can perceive and feel? A. It cannot be. R. It results then, that the soul lives ever. A. Thou urgest me too fast into joys: more slowly, I pray. R. But, if former inferences are just, I see no ground of doubt concerning this thing. A. Too fast, I say. Therefore I am easier to persuade that I have made some rash concession, than to become already secure concerning the immortality of the soul. Nevertheless evolve this conclusion, and show how it has resulted. R. You have said that falsity cannot be without sense, and that falsity cannot but be: therefore there is always sense. But no sense without soul: therefore the soul is everlasting. Nor has it power to exercise sense, unless it lives. Therefore the soul always lives.

5. A. O leaden dagger! For thou mightest conclude that man is immortal if I had granted thee that this universe can never be without man, and that this universe is eternal R. You keep a keen look-out. But yet it is no small thing which we have established, namely, that the frame of things cannot be without the soul, unless perchance in the frame of things at some time hereafter there shall be no falsity. A. This consequence indeed I allow to be involved. But now I am of opinion that we ought to consider farther whether former inferences do not bend under pressure. For I see no small step to have been made towards the immortality of the Soul. R. Have you sufficiently considered whether you may not have conceded something rashly? A. Sufficiently indeed, but I see no point at which I can accuse myself of rashness. R. It is therefore concluded that the frame of things cannot be without a living soul. A. So far as this, that in turn some souls may be born, and others die. R. What if from the frame of things falsity be taken away? will it not come to pass that all things are true? A. I admit the inference. R. Tell me whence this wall seems to thee to be true. A. Because I am not misled by its aspect. R. That is, because it is as it seems. A. Yes. R.

If therefore anything is thereby false because it seems otherwise than it is, and thereby true because it is as it seems; take away him to whom it seems, and there is neither anything false, nor true. But if there is no falsity in the frame of things, all things are true. Nor can anything seem except to a living soul. There remains therefore soul in the frame of things, if falsity cannot be taken away; there remains, if it can. A. I see our former conclusions somewhat strengthened, indeed; but we have made no progress by this amplification. For none the less does that fact remain which chiefly shakes me that souls are born and pass away, and that it comes about that they are not lacking to the world, not through their immortality, but by their succession.

6. R. Do any corporeal, that is, sensible things, appear to you to be capable of comprehension in the intellect? A. They do not. R. What then does God appear to use senses for the cognition of things? A. I dare affirm nothing unadvisedly concerning this matter; but as far as there is room for conjecture, God in no wise makes use of senses. R. We conclude therefore that the only possible subject of sense is the soul. A. Conclude provisionally as far as probability

permits. R. Well then; do you allow that this wall, if it is not a true wall, is not a wall? A. I could grant nothing more willingly. R. And that nothing, if it be not a true body, is a body? A. This likewise. R. Therefore if nothing is true, unless it be so as it seems; and if nothing corporeal can appear, except to the senses; and if the only subject of sense is the soul; and if no body can be, unless it be a true body: it follows that there cannot be a body, unless there has first been a soul. A. Thou dost urge me too strongly, and means of resistance fail me.

7. R. Give now still greater heed. A. Behold me ready. R. Certainly this is a stone; and it is true on this condition, if it is not otherwise than it seems; and it is not a stone, if it is not true; and it cannot seem except to the senses. A. Yes. R. There are not therefore stones in the most secluded bosom of the earth, nor anywhere at all where there are not those who have the sense of them; nor would this be a stone, unless we saw it; nor will it be a stone when we shall have departed, and no one else shall be present to see it. Nor, if you lock your coffers well, however much you may have shut up in them, will they have anything. Nor indeed is wood itself wood interiorly. For that escapes all perceptions of sense which is in the depth of an absolutely opaque body, and so is in no wise compelled to be. For if it were, it would be true; nor is anything true, unless because it is so as it appears: but that does not appear; it is not therefore true: unless you have something to object to this. A. I see that this results from my previous concessions; but it is so absurd, that I would more readily deny any one of these, than concede that this is true. R. As you please. Consider then which you prefer to say: that corporeal things can appear otherwise than to the senses, or that there can be another subject of sense than the soul, or that there is a stone or something else but that it is not true, or that Truth itself is to be otherwise defined. A. Let us, I pray thee, consider this last position.

8. R. Define therefore the True. A. That is true which is so as it appears to the knower, if he will and can know. R. That therefore will not be true which no one can know? Then, if that is false which seems otherwise than it is; how if to one this stone should seem a stone, to another wood will the same thing be both false and true? A. That former position disturbs me more, how, if anything cannot be known, it results from that that it is not true. For as to this, that one thing is both true and false, I do not much care. For I see one thing, compared with diverse things, to be both greater and smaller. From which it results, that nothing is more or less of itself. For these are terms of comparison. R. But if you say that nothing is true of itself, do you not fear the inference, that nothing is of itself? For whereby this is wood, thereby is it also true wood. Nor can it be, that of itself, that is, without a knower, it should be wood, and should not be true wood. A. Therefore thus I say and so I define, nor do I fear lest my definition be disapproved on the ground of excessive brevity: for to me that seems to be true which is. R. Nothing then will be false, because whatever is, is true. A. Thou hast driven me into close straits, and I am wholly unprovided of an answer. So it comes to pass that whereas I am unwilling to be taught except by these questionings, I fear now to be questioned.

9. R. God, to whom we have commended ourselves, without doubt will render help, and set us free from these straits, if only we believe, and entreat Him most devoutly. A. Nothing, assuredly, would I do more gladly in this place; for never have I been involved in so great a darkness. God, Our Father, who exhortest us to pray, who also bringest this about, that supplication is made to Thee; since when we make supplication to Thee, we live better, and are better: hear me groping in these glooms, and stretch forth Thy right hand to me. Shed over me Thy light, revoke me from my wanderings; bring Thyself into me that I may likewise return into Thee. Amen. R. Be with me now, as far as thou mayest, in most diligent attention. A. Utter, I pray, whatever has been suggested to thee, that we perish not. R. Give heed. A. Behold, I have neither eyes nor ears but for thee.

10. R. First let us again and yet again ventilate this question, What is falsity? A. I wonder if there will turn out to be anything, except what is not so as it seems. R. Give heed rather, and let us first question the senses themselves. For certainly what the eyes see, is not called false, unless it have some similitude of the true. For instance, a man whom we see in sleep, is not indeed a true man, but false, by this very fact that he has the similitude of a true one. For who, seeing a dog, would have a right to say that he had dreamed of a man? Therefore too that is thereby a false dog, that it is like a true one. A. It is as thou sayest. R. And moreover, if any one waking should see a horse and think he saw a man, is he not hereby misled, that there appears to him some similitude of a man? For if nothing should appear to him except the form of a horse, he cannot think that he sees a man. A. I fully concede this. R. We call that also a false tree which we see in a picture, and a false face which is reflected from a mirror, and a false motion of buildings to men that are sailing from them, and a false break in the oar when dipped, for no other reason than the verisimilitude in all these things. A. True. R. So we make mistakes between twins, so between eggs, so between seals stamped by one ring, and other such things. A. I follow and agree to all. R. Therefore that similitude of things which pertains to the eyes, is the mother of falsity. A. I cannot deny it.

11. R. But all this forest of facts, unless I am mistaken, may be divided into two kinds. For it lies partly in equal, partly in inferior things. They are equal, when we say that this is as like to that as that to this, as is said of twins, or impressions of a ring. Inferior, when we say that the worse is like the better. For who, looking in a mirror, would dream of saying that he is like that image, and not rather that like him? And this class consists partly in what the soul undergoes, and partly in those things which are seen. And that again which the soul undergoes, it either undergoes in the sense, as the unreal motion of a building; or in itself from that which it has received from the senses, such as are the dreams of dreamers, and perhaps also of madmen. Furthermore, those things which appear in the things themselves which we see, are some of them from nature, and some expressed and framed by living creatures. Nature either by procreation or reflection effects inferior similitudes. By procreation, when to parents children like them are born; by reflection, as from mirrors of various kinds. For although it is men that make the most of the mirrors, yet it is not they that frame the images given back. On the other hand, the works of living

creatures are seen in pictures, and creations of the like kind: in which may also be included (conceding their occurrence) those things which demons produce.

But the shadows of bodies, because with but a slight stretch of language they may be described as like their bodies and a sort of false bodies, nor can be disputed to be submitted to the judgment of the eyes, may reasonably be placed in that class, which are brought about by nature through reflection. For every body exposed to the light reflects, and casts a shadow in the opposite direction. Or do you see any objection to be made? A. None. I am only awaiting anxiously the issue of these illustrations.

12. R. We must, however, wait patiently, until the remaining senses also make report to us that falsity dwells in the similitude of the true. For in the sense of hearing likewise there are almost as many sorts of similitudes: as when, hearing the voice of a speaker, whom we do not see, we think it some one else, whom in voice be resembles; and in inferior similitudes Echo is a witness, or that well-known roaring of the ears themselves, or in timepieces a certain imitation of thrush or crow, or such things as dreamers or lunatics imagine themselves to hear. And it is incredible how much false tones, as they are called by musicians, bear witness to the truth, which will appear hereinafter: yet they too which will suffice just now) are not remote tom a resemblance to those which men call true. Do you follow this? A. And most delightedly. For here I have no trouble to understand. R. Then, to press on, do you think it is easy, by the smell, to distinguish lily from lily, or by the taste honey from honey, gathered alike from thyme, though brought from different hives, or by the touch to note the difference between the softness of the plumage of the goose and of the swan? A. It does not seem easy. R. And how is it when we dream that we either smell or taste, or touch such things? Are we not then deceived by a similitude of effects and images, inferior in proportion to its emptiness? A. Thou speakest truly. R. Therefore it appears that we, in all our senses, whether by equality or inferiority of likeness, are either misled by cozening similitude, or even if we are not misled, as suspending our consent, or discovering the difference, yet that we name those things false which we apprehend as like the true. A. I cannot doubt it.

13. R. Now give heed, while we run over the same things once more, that what we are endeavoring to show may come more plainly to view. A. Lo, here I am, speak what thou wilt. For I have once for all resolved to endure this circuitous course, nor will I be wearied out in it, hoping so ardently to arrive at length whither I perceive that we are tending. R. You do well. But take note whether it seems to you, when we see a resemblance in eggs, that we can justly say that any one of them is false. A. Far from it. For if all are eggs, they are true eggs. R. And when we see an image reflected from a mirror, by what signs do we apprehend it to be false? A. By the fact that it cannot be grasped, gives forth no sound, does not move independently, does not live, and by innumerable other properties, which it were tedious to detail. R. I see you are averse to delay, and regard must be borne to your haste. Then, not to recall every particular, if those men also whom we see in dreams, were able to live, speak, be grasped by waking men, and there were no difference between them and those whom when awake and sane we address and see, should we then have any reason to

call them false? A. What possible right could we have to do so? R. Therefore if they were true, in exact proportion as they were likest the truth, and as no difference existed between them and the true and false so far as they were, by those or other differences, convicted of being dissimilar; must it not be confessed that similitude is the mother of truth, and dissimilitude of falsehood? A. I have no answer to make, and I am ashamed of my former so hasty assent.

14. R. It is ridiculous if you are ashamed, as if it were not for this very reason that we have chosen this mode of discourse: which, since we are talking with ourselves alone, I wish to be called and inscribed Soliloquies; a new name, it is true, and perhaps a grating one, but not ill suited for setting forth the fact. For since Truth can not be better sought than by asking and answering, and scarcely any one can be found who does not take shame to be worsted in debate, and so it almost always happens that when a matter is well brought into shape for discussion, it is exploded by some unreasonable clamor and petulance, and angry feeling, commonly dissembled, indeed, but sometimes plainly expressed; it has been, as I think, most advantageous, and most answerable to peace, that the resolution was made by thee to seek truth in the way of question by me and answer by thee: wherefore there is no reason why you should fear, if at any point you have unadvisedly tied yourself up, to return and undo the knots; for otherwise there is no escape from hence.

15. A. Thou speakest rightly; but what I have granted amiss I altogether fail to see: unless perchance that that is rightly called false which has some similitude of the true, since assuredly nothing else occurs to me worthy of the name of false; and yet again I am compelled to confess that those things which are called false are so called by the fact that they differ from the true. From which it resuits that that very dissimilitude is the cause of the falsity. Therefore I am disquieted; for I cannot easily call to mind anything that is engendered by contrary causes. R. What if this is the one and only kind in the universe of things which is so? Or are you ignorant, that in running over the innumerable species of animals, the crocodile alone is found to move its upper jaw in eating; especially as scarcely anything can be discovered so like to another thing, that it is not also in some point unlike it? A. I see that indeed; but when I consider that that which we call false has both something like and something unlike the true, I am not able to make out on which side it chiefly merits the name of false. For if I say: on the side on which it is unlike; there will be nothing which cannot be called false: for there is nothing which is not dissimilar to some thing, which we concede to be true.

And again, if I shall say, that it is to be called false on that side on which it is similar; not only will those eggs cry out against us which are true on the very ground of their excessive similarity, but even so I shall not escape from his grasp who may compel me to confess that all things are false because I cannot deny that all things are on some side or other similar to each other. But suppose me not afraid to give this answer, that likeness and unlikeness alike give a right to call anything false; what way of escape wilt thou give me? For none the Its: will the fatal necessity hang over me of proclaiming all things false; since, as has

been said above, all things are found to be both similar, on some side, and dissimilar, on some side, to each other. My only remaining resource would be to declare nothing else false, except what was other than it seemed, unless I shrank from again encountering all those monsters, which I flattered myself that I had long since sailed away from. For a whirlpool again seizes me at unawares, and brings me round to own that to be true which is as it seems. From which it results that without a knower nothing can be true: where I have to fear a shipwreck on deeply hidden rocks, which are true, although unknown.

Or, if I shall say that that is true which is, it follows, let who will oppose, that there is nothing false anywhere. And so I see the same breakers before me again, and see that all my patience of thy delays has helped me forward nothing at all.

16. R. Attend rather; for never can I be persuaded, that we have implored the Divine aid in vain. For I see that, having tried all things as far as we could, we found nothing to remain, which could rightly be called false, except what either feigns itself to be what it is not, or, to include all, tends to be and is not. But that former kind of falsity is either fallacious or mendacious. For that is rightly called fallacious which has a certain appetite of deceiving; which cannot be understood as without a soul: but this results in part from reason, in part from nature; from reason, in rational creatures, as in men; from nature, in beasts, as in the fox. But what I call mendacious, proceeds from those who utter falsehood. Who in this point differ from the fallacious, that all the fallacious seek to mislead; but not every one who utters falsehood, wishes to mislead; for both mimes and comedies and many poems are full of falsehoods, rather with the purpose of delighting than of misleading, and almost all those who jest utter falsehood. But he is rightly called fallacious, whose purpose is, that somebody should be deceived. But those who do not aim to deceive, but nevertheless feign somewhat, are mendacious only, or if not even this, no one at least doubts that they are to be called pleasant falsifiers: unless you have something to object.

17. A. Proceed, I pray; for now perchance thou hast begun to teach concerning falsities not falsely: but now I am considering of what sort that class of falsities may be, of which thou hast said, It tends to be, and is not. R. Why should you not consider? They are the same things, which already we have largely passed review. Does not thy image in the mirror appear to will to be thou thyself, but to be therefore false, because it is not? A. This does, in very deed, seem so. R. And as to pictures, and all such expressed resemblances, every such thing wrought by the artist? Do they not press to be that, after whose similitude they have been made? A. I must certainly own this to be true. R. And you will allow, I believe, that the deceits under which dreamers, or madmen suffer, are to be included in this kind. A. None more: for none tend more to be such things as the waking and the sane discern; and yet they are hereby false, because that which they tend to be they cannot be. R. Why need I now say more concerning the gliding towers, or the dipped oar, or the shadows of bodies? It is plain, as I think. that they are to be measured by this rule. A. Most evidently they are. R. I say nothing concerning the remaining senses; for no one by consideration will fail

to find this, that in the various things which are subject to our sense, that is called false which tends to be anything and is not.

18. A. Thou speakest rightly; but I wonder why thou wouldst separate from this class those poems and jests, and other imitative trifles. R. Because forsooth it is one thing to will to be false, and another not to be able to be true. Therefore these works of men themselves, such as comedies or tragedies, or mimes, and other such things, we may include with the works of painters and sculptors. For a painted man cannot be so true, however much he may tend into the form of man, as those things which are written in the books of the comic poets. For neither do they will to be false, nor are they false by any appetite of their own; but by a certain necessity, so far as they have been able to follow the mind of the author. But on the stage Roscius in will was a false Hecuba, in nature a true man; but by that will also a true tragedian, in that he was fulfilling the thing proposed: but a false Priam, in that he made himself like Priam, but was not he. From which now arises a certain marvellous thing, which nevertheless no one doubts to be so. A. What, pray, is it? R. What think you, unless that all these things are in certain aspects true, by this very thing that they are in certain aspects false, and that for their quality of truth this alone avails them, that they are false in another regard?

Whence to that which they either will or ought to be, they in no wise attain, if they avoid being false. For how could he whom I have mentioned have been a true tragedian, had he been unwilling to be a false Hector, a false Andromache, a false Hercules, and innumerable other things? or how would a picture, for instance, be a true picture, unless it were a false horse? or how could there be in a mirror a true image of a man, if it were not a false man? Wherefore, if it avails some things that they be somewhat false in order that they may be somewhat true; why do we so greatly dread falsity, and seek truth as the greatest good? A. I know not, and I greatly marvel, unless because in these examples I see nothing worthy of imitation. For not as actors, or specular reflections, or Myron's brazen cows, ought we, in order that we may be true in some character of our own, to be outlined and accommodated to the personation of another; but to seek that truth, which is not, as if laid out on a bifronted and self-repugnant plan, false on one side that it may be true on the other. R. High and Divine are the things which thou requirest.

Yet if we shall have found them, shall we not confess that of these things is Truth itself made up, and as it were brought into being from their fusion-Truth, from which every thing derives its name which in any way is called true? A. I yield no unwilling assent.

19. R. What then think you? Is the science of debate true, or false? A. True, beyond controversy. But Grammar too is true. R. In the same sense as the former? A. I do not see what is truer than the true. R. That assuredly which has nothing of false: in view of which a little while ago thou didst take umbrage at those things which, be it in this way or that, unless they were false, could not be true. Or do you not know, that all those fabulous and openly false things appertain to Grammar? A. I am not ignorant of that indeed; but, as I judge, it is not through Grammar that they are false, but through it, that, whatever they may be, they

are interpreted. Since a drama is a falsehood composed for utility or delight. But Grammar is a science which is the guardian and moderatrix of articulate speech: whose profession involves the necessity of collecting even all the figments of the human tongue, which have been committed to memory and letters, not making them false, but teaching and enforcing concerning these certain principles of true interpretation. R. Very just: I care not now, whether or not these things have been well defined and distinguished by thee; but this I ask, whether it is Grammar itself, or that science of debate which shows this to be so. A. I do not deny that the force and skill of definition, whereby I have now endeavored to separate these things, is to be attributed to the art of disputation.

20. R. How as to Grammar itself? if it is true, is it not so far true as it is a discipline? For the name of Discipline signifies something to be learnt: but no one who has learned and who retains what he learns, can be said not to know; and no one knows falsities. Therefore every discipline and science is true. A. I see not what rashness there can be in assenting to this brief course of reasoning. But I am disturbed lest it should bring any one to suppose those dramas to be true; for these also we learn and retain. R. Was then our master unwilling that we should believe what he taught, and know it? A. Nay, he was thoroughly in earnest that we should know it. R. And did he, pray, ever set out to have us believe that Daedalus flew? A. That, indeed, never. But assuredly unless we remembered the poem, he took such order that we were scarcely able to hold anything in our hands. R. Do you then deny it to be true that there is such a poem, and that such a tradition is spread abroad concerning Daedalus? A. I do not deny this to be true. R. You do not then deny that you learned the truth, when you learned these things.

For if it is true that Daedalus flew, and boys should receive and recite this as a reigning fable, they would be laying up falsities in mind by the very fact that the things were true which they recited. For from this results what we were admiring above, that there could not be a true fiction turning on the flight of Daedalus, unless it were false that Daedalus flew. A. I now grasp that; but what good is to, come of it, I do not yet see. R. What, unless that that course of reasoning is not false, whereby we gather that a science, unless it is true, cannot be a science? A. And what does this signify? R. Because I wish to have you tell me on what the science of Grammar rests: for the truth of the science rests on that very principle which makes it a science. A. I know not what to answer thee. R. Does it not seem to you, that if nothing in it had been defined, and nothing distributed and distinguished into classes and parts, it could not in any wise be a true science? A. Now I grasp thy meaning:

nor does the remembrance of any science whatever occur to me, in which definitions and divisions and processes of reasoning do not, inasmuch as it is declared what each thing is, as without confusion of parts its proper attributes are ascribed to each class, nothing peculiar to it being neglected, nothing alien to it admitted, perform that whole range of functions from which it has the name of Science. R. That whole range of functions therefore from which it has the name of true A. I see this to be implied.

21. R. Tell me now what science contains the principles of definitions, divisions and partitions. A. It has been said above that these are contained in the rules of disputation. R. Grammar therefore, both as a science, and as a true science, has been created by the same art which has above been defended from the charge of falsity. Which conclusion I am not required to confine to Grammar alone, but am permitted to extend to all sciences whatever. For you have said, and truly said, that no science occurs to you, in which the law of defining and distributing does not lie at the very foundation of its character as a science. But if they are true on that ground on which they are sciences, will any one deny that very thing to be truth through which all the sciences are true? A. Assuredly I find it hard to withhold assent: but this gives me pause, that we reckon among the sciences even that theory of disputation. Wherefore I judge that rather to be truth, whereby this theory itself is true. R. Your watchful accuracy is indeed most highly to be commended: but you do not deny. I suppose, that it is true on the same ground on which it is a theory and science. A. Nay, that is my very ground of perplexity. For I have noted that it also is a science, and is on this account called true. R. What then?

Do you think this could be a science on any other ground than that all things in it were defined and distributed? A. I have nothing else to say. R. But if this function appertains to it, it is in and of itself a true science. Why then should any one find it wonderful, if that truth whereby all things are true, should be through itself and in itself true? A. Nothing stands now in the way of my giving an unreserved assent to that opinion.

22. R. Attend therefore to the few things that remain. A. Bring forth whatever thou hast, if only it be such as I can understand, and I will willingly agree. R. We do not forget, that to say that anything is in anything, is capable of a double sense. It may mean that it is so in such a sense as that it can also be disjoined and be elsewhere, as this wood in this place, or the sun in the East. Or it may mean anything is so in a subject, that it cannot be separated from it, as in this wood the shape and visible appearance, as in the sun the light, as in fire heat, as in the mind discipline, and such like. Or seems it otherwise to thee? A. These distinctions are indeed most thoroughly familiar to us, and from early youth most studiously made an element of thought; wherefore, if asked about these, I must needs grant the position at once. R. But do you not concede that if the subject do not abide, that which is in the subject cannot inseparably abide? A. This also I see necessary: for, the subject remaining, that which is in the subject may possibly not remain, as any one with a little thought can perceive. Since the color of this body of mine may, by reason of health or age, suffer change, though the body has not yet perished.

And this is not equally true of all things, but of those whose coexistence with the subject is not necessary to the existence of the subject. For it is not necessary that this wall, in order to be a wall, should be of this color, which we see in it; for even if, by some chance, it should become black or white, or should undergo some other change of color, it would nevertheless remain a wall and be so called. But if fire werewithout heat, it will not even be fire; nor can we talk of snow except as being white.

23. But as to thy question, who would grant, or to whom could it appear possible, that that which is in the subject should remain, while the subject perished? For it is monstrous and most utterly foreign to the truth that what would not be unless it were in thesubject, could be even when the subject itself was no more. R. Then that which we were seeking is found. A. What dost thou mean? R. What you hear. A. And is it then now clearly made out that the mind is immortal? R. If these things which you have granted are true, with most indisputable clearness: unless perchance you would say that the mind, even though it die, is still the mind. A. I, at least, will never say that; but by this very fact that it perishes it then comes about that it is not the mind, is what I do say. Nor am I shaken in this opinion because it has been said by great philosophers that that thing which, wherever it comes, affords life, cannot admit death into itself. For although the light wheresoever it has been able to gain entrance, makes that place luminous, and, by virtue of that memorable force of contrarieties, cannot admit darkness into itself; yet it is extinguished, and that place is by its extinction made dark. So that which resisted the darkness, neither in any way admitted the darkness into it, and yet made place for it by perishing, as it could have made place for it by departing.

Therefore I fear lest death should befall the body in such wise as darkness a place, the mind, like light, sometimes departing, but sometimes being extinguished on the spot; so that now not concerning every death of the body is there security, but a particular kind of death is to be chosen, by which the soul may be conducted out of the body unharmed, and guided to a place, if there is any such place, where it cannot be extinguished. Or, if not even this may be, and the mind, as it were a light, is kindled in the body itself, nor has capacity to endure elsewhere, and every death is a sort of extinction of the soul in the body, or of the life; some sort is to be chosen by which, so far as man is allowed, life, while it is lived, may be lived in security and tranquillity, although I know not how that can come to pass if the soul dies. O greatly blessed they, who, whether from themselves, or from whom you will, have gained the persuasion, that death is not to be feared, even if the soul should perish! But, wretched me, no reasonings, no books, have hitherto been able to persuade of this.

24. R. Groan not, the human mind is immortal. A. How dost thou prove it? R. From those things which you have granted above, with great caution. A. I do not indeed recall to mind any want of vigilance in my admissions when questioned by thee: but now gather all into one sum, I pray thee; let us see at what point we have arrived after so many circuits, nor would I have thee in doing so question me. For if thou art about to enumerate concisely those things which I have granted, why is my response again desired? Or is it that thou wouldst wantonly torture me by delays of joy, if we have in fact achieved any solid result? R. I will do that which I see that thou dost wish, but attend most diligently. A. Speak now, here I am; why slayest thou me? R. If everything which is in the subject always abides, it follows of necessity that the subject itself always abides. And every discipline is in the subject mind. It is necessary therefore that the mind should continue forever, if the science continues forever. Now Science is Truth, and always, as in the beginning of this book Reason hath convinced thee, does Truth abide. Therefore the mind lasts forever, nor dead, could it be called the

mind. He therefore alone can escape absurdity in denying the mind to be immortal, who can prove that any of the foregoing concessions have been made without reason.

25. A. And now I am ready to plunge into the expected joys, but yet I am held hesitating by two thoughts. For, first, it makes me uneasy that we have used so long a circuit, following out I know not what chain of reasonings, when the whole matter of discourse admitted of so brief a demonstration, as has now been shown. Wherefore, it renders me anxious that the discourse has so long held so wary a step, as if with some design of setting an ambush. Next, I do not see how a science is always in the mind, when, on the one hand, so few are familiar with it, and, on the other, whoever does know it, was during so long a time of early childhood unacquainted with it. For we can neither say that the minds of the untaught are not minds, nor that that science is in their mind of which they are ignorant. And if this is utterly absurd, it results that either the science is not always in the mind, or that that science is not Truth.

26. R. Thou mayest note that it is not for naught that our reasoning has taken so wide a round. For we were inquiring what is Truth, which not even now, in this very forest of thoughts and things, beguiling our steps into an infinity of paths, have we, as I see, been able to track out to the end. But what are we to do? Shall we desist from our undertaking, and wait in hope that some book or other may fall into our hands, which may satisfy this question? For many, I think, have written before our age, whom we have not read: and now, to give no guess at what we do not know, we see plainly that there is much writing upon this theme, both in verse and prose; and that by men whose writings cannot be unknown to us, and whose genius we know to be such, that we cannot despair of finding in their works what we require: especially when here before our eyes is he in whom we have recognized that eloquence for which we mourned as dead, to have revived in vigorous life. Will he suffer us, after having in his writings taught us the true manner of living. to remain ignorant of the true nature of living? A. I indeed do not think so, and hope much from thence but one matter of grief I have, that we have not opportunity of opening to him our zealous affection either towards him or towards Wisdom.

For assuredly he would pity our thirst and would overflow much more quickly than now. For he is secure, because he has now won a full conviction of the immortality of the soul, and perhaps knows not that there are any, who have only too well experienced 'the misery of this ignorance, and whom it is cruel not to aid, especially when they entreat it. But that other knows indeed from old familiarity our ardor of longing; but he is so far removed, and we are so circumstanced, that we have scarcely the opportunity of so much as sending a letter to him. Whom I believe to have lately in Transalpine retirement composed a spell, under whose ban the fear of death is compelled to flee, and the cold stupor of the soul, indurate with lasting ice, is expelled. But in the meantime, while these helps are leisurely making their way hither, a benefit which it is not in our power to command, is it not most unworthy that our leisure should be wasting, and our very mind hang wholly dependent on the uncertain decision of another's will?

27. What shall we say to this, that we have entreated God and do entreat, that He will show us a way, not to riches, not to bodily pleasures, not to popular honors and seats of state, but to the knowledge of our own soul, and that He will likewise disclose Himself to them that seek Him? Will He, indeed, forsake us, or shall He be forsaken by us R. Most utterly foreign to Him is it indeed, that He should desert them who desire such things: whence also it ought to be strange to our thoughts that we should desert so great a Guide. Wherefore, if you will, let us briefly go over the considerations from which either proposition results, either that Truth always abides, or that Truth is the theory of argumentation. For you have said that these points wavered in your mind, so as to make us less secure of the final conclusion of the whole matter. Or shall we rather inquire this, how a science can be in an untrained mind, which yet we cannot deny to be a mind? For this seemed to give you uneasiness, so as to involve you again in doubt as to your previous concessions. A. Nay, let us first discuss the two former propositions, and then we will consider the nature of this latter fact. For so, as I judge, no controversy will remain. R. So be it, but attend with the utmost heed and caution. For I know what happens to you as you listen, namely, that while you are too intent upon the conclusion, and expecting that now, or now, it will be drawn, you grant the points implied in my questions without a sufficiently diligent scrutiny. A. Perchance thou speakest the truth; but I shall strive against this kind of disease as much as I can: only begin thou now to inquire of me, that we linger not over things superfluous.

28. R. From this truth, as I remember, that Truth cannot perish, we have concluded, that not only if the whole world should perish, but even if Truth itself should, it will still be true that both the world and Truth have perished. Now there is nothing true without truth: in no wise therefore does Truth perish. A. I acknowledge all this, and shall be greatly surprised if it turns out false. R. Let us then consider that other point. A. Suffer me, I pray thee, to reflect a little, lest I should soon come back in confusion. R. Will ittherefore not be true that Truth has perished? If it will not be true, then Truth does not perish. If it were true, where, after the fall of Truth, will be the true. when now there is no truth? A. I have no further occasion for thought and consideration; proceed to something else. Assuredly we will take order, so far as we may, that learned and wise men may read these musings, and may correct our unadvisedness, if they shall find any: for as to myself, I do not believe that either now or hereafter I shall be able to discover what can be said against this.

29. R. Is Truth then so called for any other reason than as being that by which everything is true which is true? A. For no other reason. R. Is it rightly called true for any ground than that it is not false? A. To doubt this were madness. R. Is that not false which is accommodated to the similitude of anything, yet is not that the likeness of which it appears? A. Nothing indeed do I see which I would more willingly call false. But yet that is commonly called false, which is far removed from the similitude of the true. R. Who denies it? But yet because it implies some imitation of the true. A. How? For when it is said, that Medea flew away with winged snakes harnessed to her car, that thing on no side imitates truth; inasmuch as the thing is naught, nor can that thing imitate aught, when itself is absolutely nothing. R. You say right; but you do not note that that thing which is absolutely nothing,

cannot even be called false. For if it is false, it is: if it is not, it is not false. A. Shall we not then say that monstrous story of Medea is false? R. Assuredly not; for if it is false, how is it a monstrous story? A. Admirable! Then when I say"The mighty winged snakes I fasten to my car," do I not say false? R. You do, assuredly: for that is which you say to be false. A.. What, I pray? R.

That sentence, forsooth, which is contained in the verse itself. A. And pray what imitation of truth has that? R. Because it would bear the same tenor, even if Medea had truly done that thing. Therefore in its very terms a false sentence imitates true sentences. Which, if it is not believed, in this alone does it imitate true ones, that it is expressed as they, and it is only false, it is not also misleading. But if it obtains faith, it imitates also those sentences which, being true, are believed true. A. Now I perceive that there is a great difference between those things which we say and those things concerning which we say aught; wherefore I now assent: for this proposition alone held me back, that whatever we call false is not rightly so called, unless it have an imitation of something true. For who, calling a stone false silver, would not be justly derided? Yet if any one should declare a stone to be silver, we say that he speaks falsely, that is, that he utters a false sentence. But it is not, I think, unreasonable that we should call, tin or lead false silver, because the thing itself, as it were, imitates that: nor is our sentence declaring this therefore false, but that l very thing concerning which it is pronounced.

30. R. You apprehend the matter well. But consider this, whether we can also with propriety call silver by the name of false lead. A. Not in my opinion. R. Why so? A. I know not; except that I see that it would be altogether against my will to have it so called. R. Is it perchance for the reason that silver is the better, and such a name would be contemptuous of it; but it confers a certain honor, as it were, on lead, if it should be called false silver? A. Thou hast expressed exactly what I had in mind. And therefore I believe that it is with good right that those are held infamous and incapable of bearing witness, who flaunt themselves in female attire, whom I know not whether I should more reasonably call false women, or false men. True actors, however, and truly infamous, without doubt we can call them; or, if they lurk unseen, and if infamy implies an evil repute, we may call them not without truth, true specimens of worthlessness. R. We shall have another opportunity of discussing these things: for many things are done, which in the mere guise of them appear base, yet, done for some praiseworthy end, are shown to be honorable. And it is a great question whether one, for the sake of liberating his country, ought to put on a woman's garment to deceive the enemy, being, perhaps, by the very fact that he is a false woman, apt to be shown the truer man:

and whether a wise man who in some way may have certainly ascertained that his life will be necessary to the interests of mankind, ought to choose rather to die of cold, than to indue himself in female vestments, if he can find no other. But concerning this, as has been said, we will consider hereafter. For unquestionably thou discernest how careful an inquisition it requires, how far such things can be carried, without falling into various inexcusable

basenesses. But now-which suffices for the present question-I think it is now evident, and beyond doubt, that there is not anything false except by some imitation of the true.

31. A. Go on to what remains; for of this I am well convinced. 27. Then I ask this, whether, besides the sciences in which we are instructed, and in which it is fitting that the study of wisdom itself should be included, we can find anything so true, that it is not, like that Achilles of the stage, false on one side, that it may be true on another? A. To me, indeed, many such things appear capable of being found. For no sciences contain this stone, nor yet, that it may be a true stone, does it imitate anything according to which it would be called false. Which one thing being mentioned, thou seest there is opportunity to dwell upon things innumerable, which of themselves occur to the thought. R. I see, I see. But do they not seem to thee to be included in the one name of Body? A. They might so seem, if either I had ascertained. the inane to be nothing, or thought that the mind itself ought to be numbered among bodies, or believed that God also is a body. If all these things are, I see them not to be false and true in imitation of anything. R. You send us a long journey, but I will use all compendious speed. For certainly what you call the Inane is one thing, what you call Truth another. A. Widely diverse, indeed. For what more inane than I, if I think Truth anything inane, or so greatly seek after aught inane?

For what else than Truth do I desire to find? R. Therefore perchance you grant this too, that nothing is true which does not by Truth come to be true. A. This became manifest at an early stage. R. Do you doubt that nothing is inane except the Inane itself, or certainly that a body is not inane? A. I do not doubt it at all. R. I suppose therefore, you believe that Truth is some sort of body. A. In no wise. R. What is a body? A: I know not; no matter: for I think thou knowest that even that inane, if it is inane, is more completely so where there is no body. R. This assuredly is plain. A. Why then do we delay? R. Does it then seem to thee either that Truth made the inane, or that there is anything true where Truth is not? A. Neither seems true. R. The inane therefore is not true, because neither could it become inane by that which is not inane: and it is manifest that what is void of truth is not true; and, in fine, that very thing which is called inane, is so called because it is nothing. How therefore can that be true which is not or how can that be which is absolutely nothing? A. Well then, let us desert the inane as being inane.

32. R. What sayest thou concerning the rest? A. What? R. Because you see how much stands on my side. For we have remaining the Soul and God. And if these two are true for the reason that Truth is in them of the immortality of God no one doubts. But the mind is believed immortal, if Truth which cannot perish, is proved to be in it. Wherefore let as consider this last point, whether the body be not truly true, that is, whether there be in it, not Truth, but a certain image of Truth. For if even in the body, which we know to be perishable, we find such an element of truth, as there is in the sciences, it does not then so certainly follow, that the art of discussion is Truth, whereby all sciences are true. For true is even the body, which does not seem to have been formed by the force of argument. But if even the body is true by a certain imitation, and is on this account, not absolutely

and purely true, there will then, perchance, be nothing to hinder the theory of argument from being taught to be Truth itself. A Meanwhile let us inquire concerning the body; for not even when this shall have been settled, do I see a prospect of ending this controversy. R. Whence knowest thou what God purposes? Therefore attend:

for I at least think the body to be contained in a certain form and guise, which if it had not, it would not be the body; if it had it in truth, it would be the mind. Or does the fact stand otherwise? A. I assent in part, of the rest I doubt; for, unless some figure is maintained, I grant that it is not a body. But how, if it had it in truth, it would be the mind, I do not well understand. R. Do you then remember nothing concerning the exordium of this book, and that Geometry of yours? A. Thou hast mentioned it to purpose; I do indeed remember, and am most willing to do so. R. Are such figures found in bodies, as that science demonstrates? A. Nay, it is incredible how greatly inferior they are convicted of being. R. Which of them, therefore, do you think true? A. Do not, I beg, think it necessary even to put that question to me. For who is so dull, as not to see that those figures which are taught in Geometry, dwell in Truth itself, or even Truth in these; but that those embodied figures, inasmuch as, they seem, so to speak, to tend towards these, have I know not what imitation of truth, and are therefore false? For now that whole matter which thou wert laboring to show, understand.

33. R. What need is there any longer than that we should inquire concerning the science of disputation? For whether the figures of Geometry are in the Truth, or the Truth is in them, that they are contained in our soul, that, is, in our intelligence, no one calls in question, and through this fact Truth also is compelled to be in our mind. But if every science whatever is so in the mind, as in the subject inseparably, and if Truth is not able to perish; why, I ask, do we doubt concerning the perpetual life of the mind through I know not what familiarity with death? Or have that line or squareness or roundness other things which they imitate that they may be true? A. In no way can I believe that, unless perchance a line be something else than length without breadth, and a circle something else than a circumscribed line everywhere verging equally to the centre. Why then do we hesitate? Or is not Truth where these things are? A. God avert such madness. R. Or is not the science in the mind? A. Who would say that? R. But is it possible, the subject perishing, that that which is in the subject should perdure? A. When could I imagine such a thing? R. It remains to suppose that Truth may fail. A. Whence could this be brought to pass? R. Therefore the soul is immortal: now at last yield to thine own arguments, believe the Truth;

she cries out that she dwelleth in thee, and is immortal, and that her seat cannot be withdrawn from her by any possible death of the body. Turn away from thy shadow, return into thyself; of no meaning is the destruction thou fearest, except that thou hast forgotten that thou canst not be destroyed. A. I hear, I come to a better mind, I begin to recollect myself. But I beg thou wouldst expedite those things which remain; how, in an undisciplined mind, for a mortal one we cannot call it, Science and Truth are to be understood to be. R. That question requires another volume, if thou wouldst have it treated thoroughly: moreover also I see occasion for thee to review those things, which, after our best power, have been

already examined; because if no one of those things which have been admitted is doubtful, I think that we have accomplished much, and with no small security may proceed to push our inquiries farther.

34. A. It is as thou sayest, and I willingly yield compliance with thine injunctions. But this at least I would entreat, before thou decreest a term to the volume, that thou wouldst summarily explain what the distinction is between the true figure, which is contained in the intelligence, and that which thought frames to itself, which in Greek is termed either Phantasia or Phantasma. R. Thou seekest that which no one except one of purest sight is able to see, and to the vision of which thing thou art but poorly trained; nor have we now in these wide circuits anything else in view than to exercise thee, that thou mayest be competent to see: yet how it is possible to be taught that the difference is very great, perhaps I can, with a little pains, make clear. For suppose thou hadst forgotten something, and that others were wishing that thou should st recall it to memory. They therefore say: Is it this, or that bringing forward things diverse from it as if similar to it. But thou neither seest that which thou desirest to recollect, and yet seest that it is not this which is suggested. Seems this to thee, when it happens, by any means equivalent to total forgetfulness? For this very power of distinguishing, whereby the false suggestions made to time are repelled, is a certain part of recollection. A. So it seems. R. Such therefore do not yet see the truth yet they cannot be misled and deceived; and what they seek, they sufficiently know.

But if any one should say that thou didst laugh a few days after thou wast born, thou wouldst not venture to say it was false: and if he were an authority worthy of credit, thou art ready, not, indeed, to remember, but to believe; for to thee that whole time is buried in most authentic oblivion. Or thinkest thou otherwise? A. I thoroughly agree with this. it. This oblivion therefore differs exceedingly from that, but that stands midway. For there is another nearer and more closely neighboring to the recollection and rekindled vision of truth: the like of which is when we see something, and recognize for certain that we have seen it at some time, and affirm that we know it; but where, or when, or how, or with whom it came into our knowledge, we have enough to do to search our memory for an answer. As if this happens in regard to a man, we also inquire where we have known him: which when he has brought to mind, suddenly the whole thing flashes upon the memory like a light, and we have no more trouble to recollect. Is this sort of forgetfulness unknown to thee, or obscure? A. What plainer than this or what is happening to me more frequently?

35. R. Such are those who are well instructed in the liberal arts; since they by learning disinter them, buried in oblivion, doubtless, within themselves, and, in a manner, dig them out afresh: nor yet are they content, nor refrain themselves until the whole aspect of Truth, of which, in those arts, a certain effulgence already gleams forth upon them, is by them most widely and most clearly beheld. But from this certain false colors and forms themselves as it were upon the mirror of thought, and mislead inquirers often, and deceive those who think that to be the whole which they know or which they inquire. Those imaginations themselves are to be avoided with great carefulness; which are detected as fallacious, by

their varying with the varied mirror of thought, whereas that face of Truth abides one and immutable. For then thought portrays to itself, for instance, a square of this or that or the other magnitude, and, as it were, brings it before the eyes; but the inner mind which wishes to see the truth, applies itself rather to that general conception, if it can, according to which it judges all these to be squares. A. What if some one should say to us that the mind judges according to what it is accustomed to see with the eyes? R. Why then does it judge, that is, if it is well trained, that a true sphere of any conceivable size is touched by a true plane at a point?

How has eye ever seen, or how can eye ever see such a thing, when anything of this kind cannot be bodied forth in the pure imagination of thought? Or do we not prove this, when we describe even the smallest imaginary circle in our mind, and from it draw lines to the centre? For when we have drawn two, between which there is scarce room for a needle's point, we are no longer able, even in imagination, to draw others between, so that they shall arrive at the centre without any commixture; whereas reason exclaims that innumerable lines can be drawn, without being able to touch each other except in the centre, so that in every interval between them even a circle could be described. Since that Phantasy cannot accomplish this, and is more deficient than the eyes themselves, since it is through them that it inflicted on the mind, it is manifest that it differs much from Truth, and that that, when this is seen, is not seen.

36. These points will be treated with more pains and greater subtilty, when we shall have begun to discuss the faculty of intelligence, which part of our theme is proposed by us, as something which is to be developed and discussed by us, when anything gives anxiety concerning the life of the soul. For I believe thee to stand in no slight fear lest the death of man, even if it do not slay the soul, should nevertheless induce oblivion of all things, and of Truth itself, if any shall have been discovered. A. It cannot be expressed holy much this evil is to be feared. For of what sort will be that eternal life, or what death is not to be preferred to it, if the soul so lives, as we see it live in a child just born to say nothing of that life which is lived in the womb; for I do not think it to be none. R. Be of good courage; God will be present, as we now feel, to us who seek, who promises a certain most blessed body after this, and an utter plenitude of Truth without any falsehood. A. May it be as we hope.parparpar

---

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.